Northcliffe ends his message by saying that:—

"If H.M. Government were to send a strong and earnest protest to the United States I cannot believe that America would perpetrate a deed which would always be denounced as immoral regarded as an example of unfriendly commercialism.

A splendid fight at Washington has been put up by Royden who assures me that if the President were emphatically told that confiscating Allies' ships purely to gain commercial advantage is an action not in conformity with the best traditions of civilised States, Wilson might alter his opinion.

The emphasis he lays on moral issues is well known to those about him. The issue is entirely in his hands. Without a doubt he is much under the influence of McAdoo, his son-in-law, who is trying hard to secure political prestige as he may possibly in 1920 stand for the Presidency.

If we act at all we must act quickly. Anti-British prejudice in America has to be met and the Germans are directing powerful propaganda against our ships. There is great ignorance at Washington of the enormous sacrifices which the British mercantile marine has made during the War. If affairs were in my hands I would lodge an

urgent protest with the President without delay.

I hope you will pardon me for exceeding my proper functions as this matter is urgent and our Ambassador is, as I said, twelve hours distant from Washington.

Even if our protest is unsuccessful, we shall at least have placed it on record and the next time